

as of their clothing and money. The ascent and the very tedious descent of the Kasrik Kala Pass brought us into the large and fertile plain of Haizdar, the "plain of the Armenians/" sprinkled with Armenian villages, and much cultivated.

Mirza and one *zaptieh* had gone back for a blanket which had been dropped, and after halting in an orchard till I was half-frozen I decided to proceed without them, having understood that we could reach Van in three hours. I started my party by signs, and after an hour's riding reached a village where Johannes spoke fluently in an unknown tongue, and the *zaptieh* held up five fingers, which I learned too late meant that Van was five hours off. I thought that they were asking for instructions, and at every pause I repeated *Van*.

After a brief consultation we went up among the hills, the young Kurdish *Jcatirgi* jumping, yelling, singing, and howling, to keep his mules at a trot, the *zaptieh* urging them with his whip, and pointing ominously at the fast sinking sun. On we clattered with much noise, nor did we slacken speed till we gained a high altitude among desert solitudes, from which we looked down upon the Dead Sea of Van, a sheet of water extending in one direction beyond the limits of vision, lying red and weird, with high mountains jutting into it in lofty head-lands hovered over by flame-coloured clouds. High up along the mountain side in a wavy line lay the path to Van in the deepening shadows, and the *zaptieh*, this time

holding up three fingers, still urged on the  
caravan, and  
the Kurd responded by yells and howls,  
dancing and  
jumping like a madman.

Just as it was becoming dark, four mounted  
men, each  
armed with two guns, rode violently among  
the mules,  
which were in front of me, and' attempted to  
drive them  
off. In the *mtUe* the *Jcatirgi* was knocked  
down. The